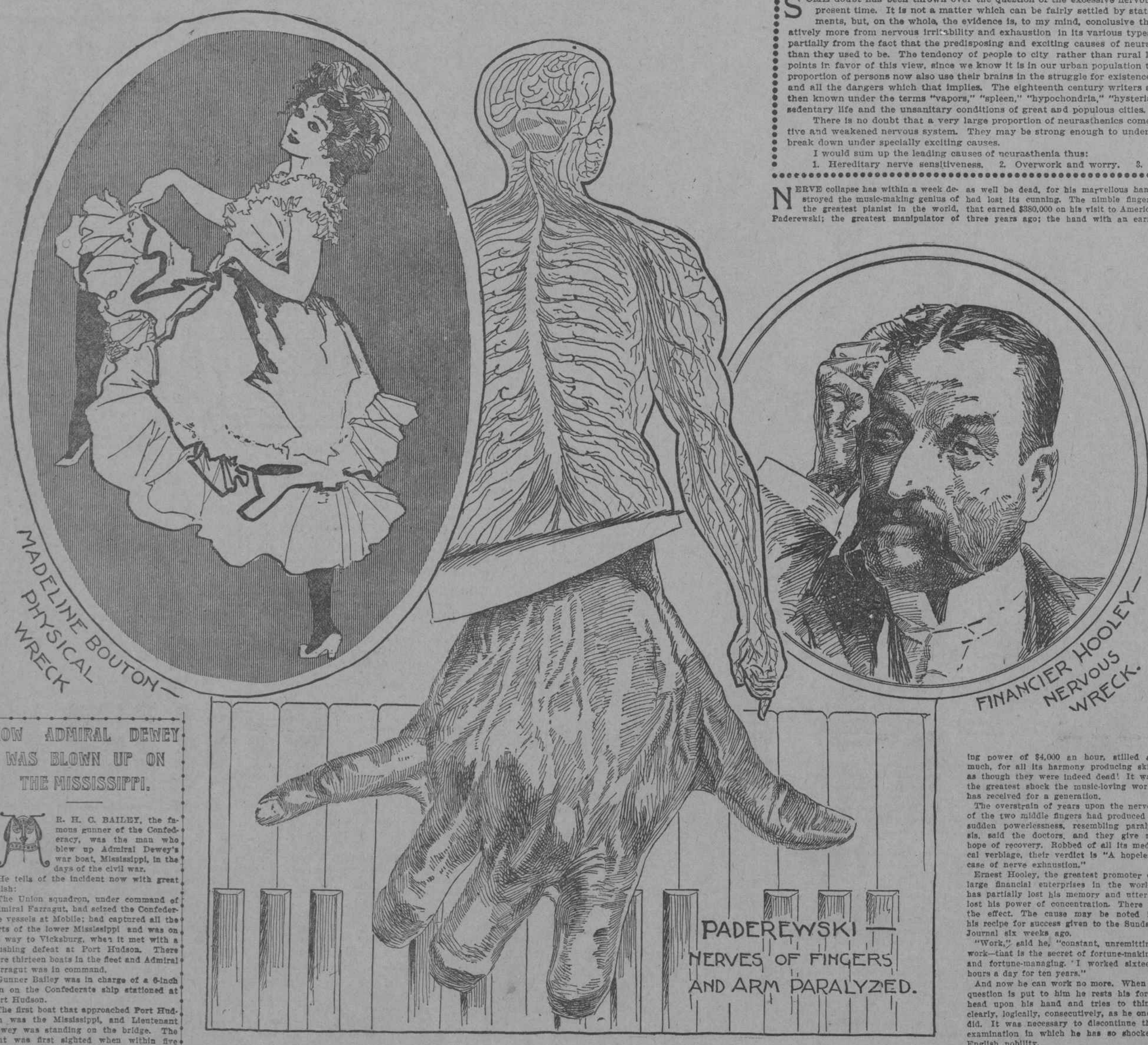
Three Powerful Warnings of Danger of Nervous Strain.

PADEREWSKI—MADELINE BOUTON—HOOLEY.



CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF SHATTERED NERVES.

BY CHARLES L. DANA, A. M., M. D.

PROFESSOR OF NERVOUS AND MENTAL DISEASES IN BELLEVUE HOSPITAL MEDICAL COLLEGE.

SOME doubt has been thrown over the question of the excessive nervousness of the civilized nations of the present time. It is not a matter which can be fairly settled by statistics or the perusal of historical documents, but, on the whole, the evidence is, to my mind, conclusive that the human race does now suffer relatively more from nervous irritability and exhaustion in its various types than it did in the past. This I infer partially from the fact that the predisposing and exciting causes of neurasthenia are more largely present now than they used to be. The tendency of people to city rather than rural life is perhaps one of the strongest points in favor of this view, since we know it is in our urban population that neurasthenia breeds best. A larger proportion of persons now also use their brains in the struggle for existence and live upon a higher mental plane, and all the dangers which that implies. The eighteenth century writers attributed all the functional disorders then known under the terms "vapors," "spleen," "hypochondria," "hysteria," to three things—luxurious living, sedentary life and the unsanitary conditions of great and populous cities.

There is no doubt that a very large proportion of neurasthenics come into the world with an over-sensitive and weakened nervous system. They may be strong enough to undergo the ordinary strains of life, but break down under specially exciting causes.

I would sum up the leading causes of neurasthenia thus:

1. Hereditary nerve sensitiveness. 2. Overwork and worry. 3. Severe shocks.

NERVE collapse has within a week destroyed the music-making genius of the greatest pianist in the world, Paderewski; the greatest manipulator of musical instruments, as well be dead, for his marvellous hand had lost its cunning. The nimble fingers that earned $380,000 on his visit to America three years ago; the hand with an earning power of $4,000 an hour, stilled as much, for all its harmony producing skill as though they were indeed dead! It was the greatest shock the music-loving world has received for a generation.

The overstrain of years upon the nerves of the two middle fingers had produced a sudden powerlessness, resembling paralysis, said the doctors, and they give no hope of recovery. Robbed of all its medical verbiage, their verdict is "A hopeless case of nerve exhaustion."

Ernest Hooley, the greatest promoter of large financial enterprises in the world, has partially lost his memory and utterly lost his power of concentration. There is the effect. The cause may be noted in his recipe for success given to the Sunday Journal six weeks ago.

"Work," said he, "constant, unremitting work—that is the secret of fortune-making and fortune-managing. I worked sixteen hours a day for ten years."

And now he can work no more. When a question is put to him he rests his forehead upon his hand and tries to think clearly, logically, consecutively, as he once did. It was necessary to discontinue the examination in which he has so shocked English nobility.

The man who can think and think and think is great, was his motto. And he has lost the art he so treasured. "Work while other men sleep," he adjured beginners in the science of business, but the men who slept while he worked are well to-day, and he is a wreck.

"Exhaustion of the nerves, collapse, a total giving out," say the physicians again.

Sprightly, beautiful Madeline Bouton is the third victim. While dancing at a stage rehearsal in San Francisco she slipped and fell, injuring her spine so severely that it was necessary to remove her to the Mac-Nutt Hospital. It is believed that she will never be able to go upon the stage again.

Madeline Bouton was a favorite in New York for several seasons.

In "Liberty Hall" and "A Gallant Surrender" hers was a brilliant role well played and there was promise of great things in Madeline Bouton, said the critics.

Three weeks ago she was practising a can-can, one of the bright bits in "Lost—Twenty-four Hours." She tripped and fell backward with frightful force, but though the fall was a painful one she rallied from it and went on with the rehearsal. Every one who saw the fall was more frightened and paler than Miss Bouton.

Her intense manner of acting is but a reflection of her marvellous will power. That will power enabled her to stay on the stage and play her part with apparent vivacity while tortured by illness. Between the scenes she could not conceal her agony. Narcotics were constantly administered, and after three weeks of disobedience to medical commands she was forced to seek the retirement of a hospital, where she lies, another victim of nerves worn to the quick.

It was during that period of three weeks of illness so bravely battled against that Miss Bouton met at a restaurant Sumner Hollander and James G. Blaine, Jr., who so far forgot their real gallantry as to fight in the lady's presence for the honor of escorting her. Her excessive nervousness on that occasion precipitated the illness that was inevitably in the wake of shattered nerves.

"Oh, I was so foolish to keep on with my work after the doctor told me not to," exclaimed Miss Bouton, the sufferer being small resemblance to Miss Bouton, the once radiant actress.

That is the moral of it all.

Rhea, the eager, ambitious and, by many regarded as a very great, actress, is the victim of nerve exhaustion at her home in France.

Too much travel, too much anxiety over the delinquencies, real or imaginary, of managers, of whom she had a constantly changing succession; too much work and the inevitable end came.

"I was at last to be relieved of anxiety about management. I had only to think of acting, but the illness has come," she writes to her new managers. "It has come, and the doctors say, alas! that I shall never be able to play again. I am very sad."

Nerve tension, nerve concentration, nerve collapse. There is a curious monotony in the story.

Has the world lost Paderewski because the little thread-like, silver-colored guides were overworked? Has it lost Hooley's powers of directing capital into lucrative channels, enriching trade as the wastes of the West are enriched, for the same reason? And winsome Madeline Bouton, and the intense Rhea? The doctors say it is true, and this time the doctors agree.

"Nineteenth century suicide," they style it, and there are harsh words they do not hesitate to use, words like idiocy and foolhardiness, and lunacy.

Genius is a hard taskmaster. He uses the goad and the lash. But there are varying degrees of geniuses.

Men and women are seen by the hundreds in New York every day who are on the high road to the bourne of nerve exhaustion, the polite preliminary of invalidism and death. You can see them on Broadway and Park Row often, sometimes on Fifth avenue.

Cornelius Vanderbilt is a victim of the dread affliction. His pale face, his anemic condition, his dim eyes, his halting gait, proclaim it.

And they are dying all about you, gentlemen, every day.

Freedom from care, exercise in plenty, a concentration that stops short of absorption, that is the task that the physicians have set to ward off nerve exhaustion, nerve collapse, nerves shattered.

HOW ADMIRAL DEWEY WAS BLOWN UP ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

ADMIRAL BAILEY, the famous gunner of the Confederacy, was the man who blew up Admiral Dewey's war boat, Mississippi, in the days of the civil war.

He tells of the incident now with great relish:

The Union squadron, under command of Admiral Farragut, had seized the Confederate vessels at Mobile; had captured all the forts of the lower Mississippi and was on its way to Vicksburg, when it met with a crushing defeat at Port Hudson. There were thirteen boats in the fleet and Admiral Farragut was in command.

Gunner Bailey was in charge of a 6-inch gun on the Confederate ship stationed at Port Hudson.

The first boat that approached Port Hudson was the Mississippi, and Lieutenant Dewey was standing on the bridge. The boat was first sighted when within five miles of the port, but the range of the guns was only four miles, and Gunner Bailey waited for the boat to get within range. Then he began firing.

"As the Mississippi came up," he said yesterday, "I began to pour solid shot into her water line. The engagement lasted only thirty-two minutes, but I fired exactly sixteen shots from my gun.

"When the boat was within one mile of my gun I sent a shot that crashed through her centre and wrecked the machinery below, crippling her engines and running her aground on the other side of the river. Before the boat could be put in shape to get into the channel we threw hot shot and combustible shells into her and she burned to the water's edge in full view of the battery.

"The crew swam ashore, Lieutenant Dewey being among the number that escaped. We sent out boats, but captured only four of the crew, as the others ran ashore, ran down the other side of the river and were taken on board the other ships of the fleet, which then returned, never again daring to pass us.

"Lieutenant Dewey was a brave man during the action, and he steered his boat full out into the channel of the river and approached our fort with colors flying, the men cheering and every gun on deck firing point blank at us. We did not lose a single man, and not one of us was even injured. Dewey then got the same defeat that he gave the Spaniards a few weeks ago at Manila, and he doubtless used some of the experience then that we gave him on the Mississippi."

Gunner Bailey now lives near Carrollton and is Coroner of Carroll County.

THE FRUITLESS INVASION OF OLD LONDON BY THE AMERICAN GIRL AND JOKE.

BY ALAN DALE.

THE American girl and the American joke crossed the Atlantic and anchored in London this Summer. Tabulated reports of undiluted successes have reached us from time to time. The girl and the joke, to our extreme surprise, seemed to be prospering to a remarkable degree. But the season has come to an end; the truth has filtered slowly in; the facts are interesting but not as new as we thought. The American joke has been utterly, absolutely, and ignominiously routed. The American girl has sailed in triumphantly, carried all before her, and boomed herself once more. The salt of the ocean, that takes all the starch out of a Hoyt Tenderloinina, simply freshens up and beautifies the American girl. The author of "A Stranger in New York" cast a gloom over London. The leading lovelinesses of "The Belle of New York" cheered it up and exhilarated it.

Humor, like morality, is simply a question of latitude and longitude. A girl isn't. London's treatment of New York persiflage is identical with New York's treatment of London persiflage. We have had, sent fresh from the Strand, "Gaiety" girls and "Shop" girls, and girls of all descriptions, set in the most elaborate frames of London wit. The wit has gone back unappreciated and ridiculed, but we have written lovingly of the girls and feted them while they were with us. We sobbed bitterly at the fun their accompanying comedians emitted, but we declined to vent our grievances upon the maidens. The English girl succeeded. The English joke failed.

In the long list of plays that America sent to London this Summer, there has been no real success save that achieved by "The Belle of New York." A dispassionate writer declares solemnly that the English field is still unconquered, and perhaps it is as well that we should know where we are "at," because the tendency to assert that London has appreciated everything American indiscriminately may disastrously lead managers to place the English metropolis upon their "one night stand" list by the side of Redbank, N. J., and Prairie du Chien, Wis. "The Belle of New York" was the production for which we prophesied failure. When Uncle Marcus Mayer took his galaxy of Casino beauties across the briny we said mournful "Tatas," and the Casino people themselves were afraid. You see, these lissome, unconventional American girls are an old story to us. We have been brought up on them, and educated with them. Those we saw in "The Belle of New York" didn't appeal to us very particularly. In England it was otherwise. London had never seen anything quite so unusual as our invoice of Edna Mays and Phyllis Rankins and Helen Duponts. They conquered.

New York was wild with delight over Hoyt's "A Stranger in New York," with its Tenderloin quips and its cocktail wiles. The piece went with a rush from beginning to end. We held our sides and roared. We splashed in mirth when the old gentleman was taken to a plague house, stripped and fumigated. We giggled in sympathy at the boozing men and women, and we pinnacled Hoyt and his jokes. Away went "A Stranger in New York" to London. The 'Arries and 'Arriets in the pit sat bolt upright in solemn-eyed wonder, and couldn't understand what it was all about. Every point was lost, and Hoyt was accused of being coarse and vulgar and chestnutty. Humor had crossed the Atlantic and had been worsted.

They saw nothing entertaining in it. When the waiter passed Harry Conor a glass of water, and he—with the Tenderloin aversion to water—took from his buttonhole a bunch of violets and placed them in the glass, New York shrieked with glee. New York was looking at its pet Tenderloiner, dallying with the fecund Hoffman House idea of wit. London didn't like it. London would have preferred some obvious allusion to water and some paretic pun dealing with wine. The geography of humor was never better illustrated. There is no Hoffman House in the Strand, and the middle-class British mind regards a "pint of 'arf and 'arf" not as a jest, but as a stern and necessitous reality.

Half the jokes in "A Stranger in New York" dealt with inebriety. Inebriety is a pregnant source of humor in America. In England it isn't. There they drink more, possibly, but they drink less fancifully. Their imaginations are not inspired by the fantastic joys of gin rickeys and mint juleps. Hoyt was swamped in his efforts to jocularize the mournful realities of the public house.

We were equally dense when the extremely insular Dan Leno came here as "the funniest man on earth." Mr. Leno is a giant in London. He went back cursing America, because his brand of humor was unintelligible here. All the 'Arriets in London used to scream with laughter at his joke about boiling a pudding in a kettle and trying to pour it out through the spout. The New York matrons who saw Leno were perfectly untouched by this particular brand of fun. They understood no more about English puddings than the Londoners understood about American drinks, and the result was calamitous to poor Leno. He felt very much insulted, and New York will never see him again.

In the great international exchange of stage material—beware of drama, comedy, farce—gamble only on Girl. Girl never fails. Geography is smashed to atoms in the presence of Girl. A Marie Studholme comes over here to set our pulses throbbing with appreciation, and an Edna May goes over there to become the fad. This may be a rather primitive idea, due to the stern and unyielding laws of sex, but it is there, and you can't help realizing it. I may have all sorts of imprecations hurled at my head for the gross idea of asserting that the American girl has knocked out the American drama and the American joke, but until somebody shows me distinctly that I am wrong, I shall continue to declare it.

"The Heart of Maryland," Belasco's admirable play that has made a fortune in America, was not particularly adored in London. It came after "Secret Service," and was unfavorably compared with it, just as though it were possible to have too much of a good thing. The talent and the charms of Mrs. Leslie Carter were admitted, but "The Heart of Maryland" didn't cause the Thames to burn. In fact, the Thames is still there, cold and wet. "Too Much Johnson," at which we laughed immoderately, and which to our minds is as far superior to "Charley's Aunt" as "Hamlet" is to "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was not furiously applauded. Gillette's idea of playing a farcial character perfectly serious was not appreciated, and this American actor is generally conceded to have enjoyed but half a success. "Sue" was an Annie Russell triumph only. The play was not particularly approved. The girl that centred in it was responsible entirely for any attention that was bestowed upon it.

Perhaps it would be just as well for managers to realize all this. England and America have a great big ocean between them, and the ideas that flourish on one side of that seething pool very rarely bloom on the other. In fact, you can't get them across with any degree of satisfaction. The Girl can breast those billows and land successfully on either side of them. The Girl isn't an idea. She is a reality, and she always "goes." She is hampered occasionally by her setting, as George Edwardes can testify. She is a timid thing, and likes to be chaperoned over the water by hosts of comedians, tons of libretto and shiploads of music. These generally fall and militate against the triumph of the Girl. The American public last season liked Miss Studholme, but didn't care for "In Town," the aggregation that accompanied her.

In "The Belle of New York" there was so much femininity that Hugh Morton and Gustave Kerker came in for a great deal of its lustre. The piece has run triumphantly at the Shaftesbury Theatre ever since it landed there, and the Casino proprietors have come to the conclusion that they can henceforth divide their beauties between London and New York. Undoubtedly they will be able to do so, until London gets so accustomed to the New York maiden that the charm of novelty has gone. Dan Daly came back to New York, and "The Belle" still ran on, although we, in our ignorance, imagined that it was Daly's humor that pulled the piece through.

The folly of taking jokes across the Atlantic should stop. Managers have been trying it for a long time, and the result is always the same. Every country believes in its own humor, and international complications are incessantly threatened by the rude devastation of that belief. A man like Hoyt, who has lived his life in America, knows how to make American people laugh. His studio is in New York, between Twenty-third and Thirty-third streets. He is as helpless and as incomprehensible in the Strand as he would be in Timbuctoo or Senegambia. He can depict the humorous experiences of a stranger in New York, but those experiences are tragic in London. What we call funny they call vulgar, and no man in his efforts to inspire laughter cares to be called vulgar. That the fate of "A Stranger" in London will injure the American author in his native land nobody believes. But it is stupid to take risks; and such cases have been known. Dan Leno never thoroughly recovered from his American failure. It confronted him when he returned to England, and he was never able to completely rout it.

If American managers insist upon being international—and there is a strange belief that by so doing their laurels grow thicker and greener—let them export the American girl. The humorist and the dramatist, the comedian and the farce writer are happier at home. Their sphere of usefulness is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean. The Girl can live on either shore, and do herself justice wherever she is. She has no land in particular, and she is not dependent upon any institutions. Her accent is not criticised, and her literary quality is not mentioned. She takes her skirts with her, and there is no law to regulate them.

If we had remembered all this in time the whole success of "The Belle of New York" and the half success of other American exportations would not have astonished us. We should have been prepared for it. Experience is the best preceptor, and we shall know in future. If any one had told me last February that the Casino extravaganza, with its laborious humor, noisy music and general incoherence was going to startle London I should have laughed derisively. I had seen much better extravaganzas in New York, and I didn't stop to think that in London they hadn't had anything of the sort, and that the girls would cover all deficiencies. You won't find me laying down any laws of success and non-success hereafter, as far as London is concerned. I shall back one American girl against a wagon load of American jokes. Humor has limits. Girl hasn't.

ALAN DALE.